

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Videotaped Remarks on the Observance of Rosh Hashanah

September 17, 2009

As members of the Jewish faith here in America and around the world gather to celebrate the High Holidays, I want to extend my warmest wishes for this New Year. *L'shanah Tovah Tikatevu*—may you have a good year, and may you be inscribed for blessings in the Book of Life.

Rosh Hashanah marks the start of a new year, a time of humble prayer, joyful celebration, and hope for a new beginning. Ten days later, Yom Kippur stands as a day of reflection and repentance. And this sacred time provides not just an opportunity for individual renewal and reconciliation, but for families, communities, and even nations to heal old divisions, seek new understandings, and come together to build a better world for our children and grandchildren.

At the dawn of this New Year, let us rededicate ourselves to that work. Let us reject the impulse to harden ourselves to others' suffering, and instead, make a habit of empathy, of recognizing ourselves in each other, and extending our compassion to those in need.

Let us resist prejudice, intolerance, and indifference in whatever forms they may take. Let us stand up strongly to the scourge of anti-Semitism, which is still prevalent in far too many corners of our world. Let us work to extend the rights and freedoms so many of us enjoy to all the world's citizens: to speak and worship freely; to live free from violence and oppression; to make of our lives what we will. And let us work to achieve lasting peace and security for the State of Israel, so that the Jewish state is fully accepted by its neighbors, and its children can live their dreams free from fear. That's why my administration is actively pursuing the lasting peace that has eluded Israel and its neighbors for so long.

Throughout history, the Jewish people have been, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, "a light unto the nations." Through an abiding commitment to faith, family, and justice, Jews have overcome extraordinary adversity, holding fast to the hope of a better tomorrow.

In this season of renewal, we celebrate that spirit, we honor a great and ancient faith, and we rededicate ourselves to the work of repairing this world.

Michelle and I wish all who celebrate Rosh Hashanah a healthy, peaceful, and sweet New Year.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 2:15 p.m. on September 11 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released Arabic, French, Hebrew, Persian, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish language transcripts of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Rosh Hashanah, videotaped remarks on the observance of.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Subjects: Civil rights : Freedom of religion; Civil rights : Freedom of speech; Civil rights : Freedom of the press; Civil rights : Minorities :: Anti-Semitism; Civil rights : Minorities ::

Minority rights and ethnic tolerance; Civil rights : Racial equality; Middle East : Peace and democracy efforts; Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur.

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